NIH Cambridge Research Scholars Application and Matriculation Guidelines

NIH Oxford–Cambridge Scholars Program
Introduction

Congratulations on being accepted into the NIH OxCam Scholars programme, this is an achievement of which you should be very proud.

By now you should have been given the following documents by the NIH in order to confirm your place and are thinking about which University to choose. Please contact the NIH OxCam office (contacts listed below) if you have not received any of the following documents:

• Written confirmation of award acceptance
• Welcome letter including details about dates, housing, and map for visit weeks
• A request for information necessary for Intramural Research Training Award (IRTA) processing, new class resources pages and a Bio
• Class dean assignment, contact in the UK and UK travel information
• PDF of your University Funding letter

This is a four-year PhD programme with two years spent at the NIH labs in the USA and two years spent in either Cambridge or Oxford. We endeavour to ensure this is a flexible programme and this document will give you guidance about how the University application process works.

Why Choose Cambridge? [http://www.graduate.study.cam.ac.uk/](http://www.graduate.study.cam.ac.uk/)

Affiliates of University of Cambridge have won more Nobel Prizes than those of any other institution. Cambridge has had 107 Nobel prize winners since 1904, including 18 since 2002. In 2018 Gregory Winter (Trinity College alumnus and Master), MRC Laboratory of Molecular Biology was awarded the Nobel Prize in Chemistry with George P Smith from the University of Missouri, USA, for the phage display of peptides and antibodies (the other half
of this prize was awarded to Frances H Arnold, California Institute of Technology, USA, for the directed evolution of enzymes).

Affiliates have received Nobel Prizes in every category, 32 in Physics, 26 in Medicine, 25 in Chemistry, 11 in Economics, three in Literature and two in Peace. Trinity College has 33 Nobel Prize winners, the most of any college at Cambridge. Dorothy Hodgkin is the first woman from Cambridge to win a Nobel Prize, for her work on the structure of compounds used in fighting anaemia. Frederick Sanger, from St John’s and fellow of King’s, is one of only four individuals to win a Nobel Prize twice. He won the Nobel Prize in Chemistry in 1958 and 1980. [http://www.cam.ac.uk/research/research-atcambridge/nobel-prize-winners](http://www.cam.ac.uk/research/research-atcambridge/nobel-prize-winners)

**Cambridge Biomedical Campus**

[https://cambridge-biomedical.com/](https://cambridge-biomedical.com/)

The University of Cambridge is the UK’s leading research university and is consistently ranked in the top five universities in the world. The School of Clinical Medicine is housed in multiple buildings across the CBC and comprises 12 Academic Departments, four Research Institutes and five Medical Research Council (MRC) units. It conducts internationally excellent peer-reviewed basic, clinical and translational research relating to a diverse range of medical conditions and treatments.

The Medical Research Council Laboratory of Molecular Biology (MRC LMB) is a world-class research institute dedicated to understanding important biological processes, providing the knowledge needed to solve key problems in human health. The Institute has made revolutionary contributions to science such as pioneering the sequencing of DNA and the development of monoclonal antibodies. Eleven Nobel Prizes have been awarded for work carried out by LMB scientists. Since 2013 the Institute has occupied a purpose-built, £212 million facility on the Campus with state-of-the-art facilities and a unique scientific culture.

In partnership with associated hospitals the University is one of only five UK ‘Academic Health Science Centres’. This prized status is awarded by an international panel in recognition of the University of Cambridge as an internationally leading university medical centre, with groups that are globally competitive in translating excellence in biomedical science into more effective healthcare.

**The Cambridge Biomedical Campus**, located on the southern edge of Cambridge, contains (i) the University School of Clinical Medicine with its 12 Departments and associated Institutes, (ii) Addenbrooke’s Hospital, a major University Teaching Hospital with 1100 beds and regional services, to the whole of the East of England, and (iii) a directly funded Research Institute – the MRC Laboratory for Molecular Biology (LMB). In addition to the LMB there are 5 MRC Units in Cambridge, of which 4 are located on the campus as well as the MRC Mitochondrial Biology Unit.

The University’s main Biological Science campus is on the Downing site in the centre of Cambridge and houses the School of the Biological Sciences, which has particular strengths in developmental, cellular and molecular research, in integrative and comparative physiology and systems biology, and in neuroscience. Research within the School of the Biological Sciences pursues a number of cross-cutting themes which intersect with the research themes in the School of Clinical Medicine in cardiovascular biology, neurosciences, cancer, infection, and immunology. There are two Institutes within the School of Biological Sciences with outstanding strengths in key areas of biomedical research: the Wellcome CR-UK Gurdon Institute noted for its major strengths in developmental biology, and the Wellcome MRC Institute for Stem Cell Biology which pursues research in basic stem cell biology, and is closely linked with translational stem cell medicine on the Cambridge Biomedical Campus. To the south of Cambridge are the
Babraham Institute (funded by the BBSRC) and the Hinxton Genome Campus with the Wellcome Trust Sanger Institute and the European Bioinformatics Institute.

The co-location in Cambridge of a major regional University Hospital, University Medical School and Research Institutes on a single campus, together with these surrounding strengths in Biological Science in a 5 mile radius and a major cardiothoracic hospital nearby, is unusual within the UK and offers an exceptional, if not unique, environment for the highest quality collaborative biomedical research, and its translation.

Contact Information

Cambridge
- Cambridge Programme Director: Dr Menna Clatworthy mrc38@medschl.cam.ac.uk
- Cambridge, OxCam Programme Coordinator: Elizabeth McIntyre, ejm45@medschl.cam.ac.uk

NIH
- OxCam Programme Scientific Director: Dr Alan Sher ASHER@niaid.nih.gov
- MD/PhD Programme Scientific Director: Dr Craig Blackstone BlackstC@ninds.nih.gov
- OxCam Academic Dean: Dr Jim Sellers, sellersj@nhlbi.nih.gov
- NIH Managing Director: Ms Katie Stagliano staglianoke@mail.nih.gov
- OxCam Program Assistant: Ms Lauren Milligan lauren.milligan@nih.gov

Programme Websites
- http://oxcam.gpp.nih.gov (OXCAM)
- http://oxcam.gpp.nih.gov/about/partnership.asp (MD/PhD)
- http://cato.medschl.cam.ac.uk/ (GCAT)

Section 1: When and how to apply
The Application portal is fully automated and opens on September 1st of the year before entry and closes on the 28th June of the year of entry.

Alternative Funding Opportunities: There are opportunities for funding that many prospective OxCam scholars can apply for during October to December such as Gates, Cambridge Trust (CT), Vice-Chair and college awards. We recommend all prospective applicants to the NIH OxCam scholars programme take this opportunity to apply. Awards from Gates, CT and others are accommodated within the NIH OxCam programme. The application is different in that you will apply to the Cambridge department of your choice – not the NIH OxCam programme code- and your application progresses from there.

The benefits of applying at the earlier time is that your application to the University is progressed quite far by the time of the NIH OxCam award and other award announcements.

For those that have not applied and have waited until the NIH OxCam award announcements in Feb/Mar, it is important you commence your application to the University as soon as you accept your award.

If you are on the MD PhD track you are encouraged to apply the year before you take up your award, even if you plan to commence your PhD course at the NIH.

To apply to Cambridge look at these links:
- https://www.graduate.study.cam.ac.uk/courses
- https://www.graduate.study.cam.ac.uk/how-do-i-apply
You must apply online **no later** than the 28th June. The application portal **closes** after this date - **there are no exceptions**.

Follow the instructions on how to apply. If you already know the supervisor you wish to work with here in Cambridge please put this person’s name and programme code into your application. **There are NIH specific codes that you must use.** Please see attached table:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Course</th>
<th>Code</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Probationary in BioChemistry</td>
<td>BLBINH224</td>
<td>Probationary in Biological Science @ MRC LMB</td>
<td>NUMBNH224</td>
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<tr>
<td>Probationary in Biological Science at MRC MBU</td>
<td>NUDNNH224</td>
<td>Probationary in Biological Science @ Sanger Institute</td>
<td>NUSCNH224</td>
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<tr>
<td>Probationary in Biotechnology</td>
<td>EGCBNH224</td>
<td>CPGS in Chemistry</td>
<td>CHCNH1</td>
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<td>Probationary in Clinical Biochemistry</td>
<td>MDCBNH224</td>
<td>Probationary in Clinical Neurosciences</td>
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<td>Probationary in Medical Genetics</td>
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<td>Probationary in Oncology</td>
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<td>Probationary in Pathology</td>
<td>BLPANH224</td>
<td>Probationary in Surgery</td>
<td>MDSUNH224</td>
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<td>Probationary in Psychiatry</td>
<td>MDPSNH224</td>
<td>Probationary in Physiology, Development &amp; Neurosciences (PDN)</td>
<td>BLPNNH224</td>
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<td>VTVTNH224</td>
<td>Probationary in Medicine</td>
<td>MDMDNH224</td>
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<tr>
<td>Probationary in Zoology</td>
<td>BLZONH224</td>
<td>Probationary in Engineering</td>
<td>EGEGNH224</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Probationary in Biological Science @ Babraham</td>
<td>NUANNH224</td>
<td>Probationary in Obstetrics &amp; Gynaecology</td>
<td>MDOGNH224</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Probationary in Public Health &amp; Primary Care</td>
<td>MDPUNH224</td>
<td>Probationary in Clinical Biochemistry @ CIMR</td>
<td>MDCBMRNH24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Probationary in Medical Science @ CIMR (NIH)</td>
<td>MDMRNH224</td>
<td>Probationary in Medicine</td>
<td>MDMDNH224</td>
</tr>
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</table>

**GENERAL COURSE CODE: MDNH224**
If you have not yet chosen your supervisor (don’t worry), you simply need to apply to Cambridge under the generic code for Dr Menna Clatworthy (Department of Medicine) and use the course code MDNH224. When you have chosen and been accepted by a Cambridge supervisor and department inform Elizabeth McIntyre and we will update your camsis record to reflect your new home department.

Choosing a college
All students become members of one of the 31 colleges in the University with the opportunity to meet staff and students from other disciplines, participate in a wide variety of cultural, sporting and social activities and arrange accommodation and meals.  https://www.graduate.study.cam.ac.uk/colleges/key-facts-and-figures

Many of you will not be familiar with the unique college systems at Cambridge and Oxford and making a decision can be very daunting. The best advice we (Cambridge) can give you is the following:

• Talk with existing Scholars
• Look at the website of various the Colleges
• Contact the middle or senior common room societies – these are the graduate societies that each college has and they can discuss with you the kind of activities they get involved in
• Visit this website http://www.graduate.study.cam.ac.uk/colleges/choosing-college

Think about the following things when choosing a college:

• Do I want a large formal College?
• Do I want a small home-like environment?
• Do I want a sporty College?
• Do I want to be in town or slightly out of town?

Colleges are where you will live, and they play a large role in your pastoral care and social activities. Choosing a College is very personal, so think about it carefully. Please bear in mind that the later you apply the more difficult it is to get into some of the larger more famous Colleges, but this does not mean any of the others are less desirable. All Colleges have their own attractions and it is almost inevitable that people develop affectionate attachments for their College whichever it happens to end up being.

Colleges receive a full copy of your application and usually meet weekly to assess applicants. Your first and second choices may not be successful. If this happens your papers will be sent out into a general pool for consideration, please take this into account when you choose a popular College, like Kings or Trinity, as these will fill up quickly.

Application documents
Please upload all the requested original documents onto the application portal. It is very important that you understand that we will not accept the paperwork you submitted to the NIH and will require originals of all the documents requested including new references. Please remember to include your funding letter (supplied by the NIH OxCam Office).

Your application can take upwards of a month or more to complete. The faster we receive your supporting papers, the sooner you will be processed and you can then move onto the ATAS and visa process. **NB: It is important to check your CamSIS self-service account often, as changes and requests may appear here without email notification.**
Section 2: ATAS and VISA

ATAS: All non-European Economic Area candidates for PhD-level research degrees or Masters courses in certain science and technology subjects require an ATAS certificate - (Academic Technology Approval Scheme). This is a system used in the UK to defend against biological weaponry. The International Student Team will advise you once your research project is defined.

All NIH Ox/Cam Scholars will require ATAS clearance as part of their condition of acceptance to the University.

Please note that you cannot apply for ATAS or your visa until your supervisor and research project are defined and submitted to your application on CAMSIS.

The International Students office http://www.ist.admin.cam.ac.uk/ advises that students apply for ATAS clearance as part of their application to Cambridge - students are required to upload a copy of the certificate. The certificate is free and valid for 6 months. http://www.graduate.study.cam.ac.uk/internationalstudents/immigration/atas

- The FCO (Foreign and Commonwealth Office) suggests they consider applications within 20 working days. However, if you are required to provide additional information, the process may take considerably longer.

- When you receive the ATAS certificate, you must upload it to your CAMSIS account.

The process so far:

1. Apply to the University
2. Choose a Mentor
3. Discuss and agree your research project with the University Department you will be working with.
4. Get a research description and apply for your ATAS Certificate and upload onto CAMSIS

Process to obtain Tier 4 Visa: Applying for a Tier 4 student visa
https://www.internationalstudents.cam.ac.uk/immigration/visa-advice

The following information provides an overview of applying for a Tier 4 student visa in the US:

- Applications for visas can only be made within 3 months of your arrival date in the UK – not before.
- Obtain ATAS clearance from the Foreign and Commonwealth Office using the research statement provided by the Graduate Admissions Office:
- Once all offer conditions are fulfilled, the University will issue a Confirmation of Acceptance for Studies (CAS) to support your visa application. This is sent by email.
- Complete the online visa application form, pay the NHS surcharge and visa application fee and book your biometric appointment: https://visa4uk.fco.gov.uk/
- Attend your biometric appointment at the Application Support Centre (ASC) you selected when you applied online. You will need to take your passport and a copy of your biometric confirmation receipt. You can find your nearest ASC at http://alturl.com/wriep
- Once you have attended your biometric appointment, you have two weeks to post the following documents to UK Visas and Immigration at the British Consulate in New York:
  - Passport
  - Two passport photographs
  - ATAS certificate
• Biometric confirmation receipt which will have been stamped at your appointment.

- US nationals qualify for differentiation arrangements under Tier 4. This means that you do not need to include evidence of qualifications or finances with your visa application although you are expected to hold this documentation in the required format and could be asked for them during the application process.
- You will be issued an entry permit to the UK in your passport. You should arrive in the UK before the permit expires. You will need to collect your visa, in the form of a Biometric Residence Permit (BRP), within 10 days of arriving in the UK.

**Further information:**
International Student Team email: internationalstudents@admin.cam.ac.uk

**Doctorate Extension Scheme:**
The Doctorate Extension Scheme is a visa offered to Tier 4 students finishing their PhD that allows them to stay in the UK for one year to find work, so quite useful for some people in OxCam who have decided to stay a little longer. The visa application must go through before the hardbound thesis is submitted. The financial sponsor statement is required even if you no longer receive financial sponsorship, if you have previously in the past 12 months, you must have a letter stating that your sponsor consents to your remaining in the UK. Some sponsorship programs require government service, etc. in the country of sponsorship as a condition of the funding. Obtain this letter from your NIH particular institution.

The **UK Border Agency** is your primary source of information on all matters concerning immigration. [http://www.ukba.homeoffice.gov.uk/visas-immigration/studying/adultstudents/](http://www.ukba.homeoffice.gov.uk/visas-immigration/studying/adultstudents/)

**Notes:**
- **Anyone who enters with CAS is subject to these duties and must also:**
  - Provide a copy of their passport, visa/ID card to their College
  - Provide up-to-date contact details
  - Make ten contacts with their College

- **Students have restrictions on CAS, e.g.**:
  - Cannot work more than 20 hours pw during term time.
  - Cannot be self-employed

- **Students may not:**
  - Just turn up without correct visa (those coming as tourists will be sent back home)
  - Come using a visa not issued/sponsored by us
  - Overstay (penalties range from automatic ban for 12 months - 10 years)
  - Ignore conditions of sponsorship

- **Important:**
  - Follow all that is required by the UKBA (e.g. passport photo size, documents requested and in format requested)
  - Most of visa rejections occur because student failed to make a complete application

**Spouses/Dependants working**
Section 4: Cambridge Orientation week and the Annual Workshop
Orientation week and the annual workshop are a great opportunity for you to make final decisions about your supervisor and which University you wish to attend. However as they always occur in late June/early July, it is good to try to visit the UK or skype with your potential Cambridge supervisors earlier, if feasible. Remember you have much paperwork to fill in before you can start in the UK, so if you are determined to be here in the first term decisions may need to be made sooner.

For orientation week you will be provided with a bed and breakfast in Cambridge (usually in a college).

Section 5: MD PhD candidates
All the information above also applies to you except that you should be looking to start your application process in September/October of the year BEFORE you enter Cambridge.

- Apply to the University
- Apply for your ATAS clearance
- Apply for your VISA

Cambridge MBPhD opportunities for MD/PhD Students
Whilst you are based in Cambridge you will have the opportunity to gain some clinical teaching experience through small group bedside teaching sessions (Clinical Supervisions) - if you would like to and are willing to make the commitment to do so and your PhD Supervisor is supportive in releasing you to attend.

Key contacts:
Dr Mark Lillicrap (Clinical Sub Dean for Curriculum) Email: msl29@medschl.cam.ac.uk
MB/PhD Administrator Email: Year4admin@medschl.cam.ac.uk
http://www.medschl.cam.ac.uk/education/courses/mbphd/

The Clinical Supervision teaching programme supplements the University’s clinical teaching programme in Cambridge and is led by Dr Mark Lillicrap. Clinical Supervisors are trainee doctors, working in Cambridge, who provide weekly (1 hour) bedside teaching sessions to clinical medical students, and small college-based supervision groups, throughout the three years of the clinical course (six years of the MB/PhD programme). The sessions focus on clinical assessment (history and examination skills), diagnostic reasoning and management planning. They are generally arranged in an evening and the timing is flexible to fit with the needs of the group and the Clinical Supervisor.

Further information can be provide by the MB/PhD Administrator

Section 6: ‘Leave To Work Away’ (LTWA) and residency

This is very important and has serious implications on your visa status if you fail to report your absences from Cambridge.

All absences from Cambridge including research at your NIH lab needs to be recorded and permission sought. This is referred to as ‘Leave to Work Away’.
Application for LTWA is completed through your camsis self-service. You can apply for ‘leave to work away’ for up to three terms at a time and you must provide you start and end dates of the LTWA period. Through this process your supervisor, college, department and degree committee are made aware of, and may consider, your application. Any application for LTWA should be commenced after having discussion with both your Cambridge and NIH supervisor and in line with your research plan. You may only apply for LTWA once you have commenced your course in the first year- from 1 October of your first year.

The maximum terms of residence in both institutions (Cambridge/NIH) is 6 terms – as agreed between Cambridge and NIH. Any change to this arrangement will be considered in exceptional circumstances and must be with full agreement of the programme directors, supervisors, department, college and degree committee. Forms to apply for consideration can be obtained from Elizabeth McIntyre. Application does not guarantee approval.

As part of your Tier 4 sponsorship you must register your attendance/residency with your college every term or as often as they advise. You are either registered at college or LTWA. You must contact your college termly by email during your period of LTWA to ensure your Tier 4 visa status remains unaffected.

**New Students - LTWA**

Students just starting their PhD and who plan to start at the NIH (ie not in Cambridge for the first term of the PhD) will need to apply for LTWA through camsis self-service.

The registration for new students does not start until after 18 August at which point Student Registry will term activate new students and send an invitation to register. Once registered the @cam email address and (limited) access to camsis self-service will be activated.

As you will be a new student your record (and your principal supervisor) is not active until the first day of term (1st October) As such, you will be unable to apply for LTWA until this date as this is when your camsis self-service record is fully active.

http://www.cambridgestudents.cam.ac.uk/your-course/graduate-study/your-studentstatus/work-away-cambridge

**Section 7: Arriving in Cambridge**

**Induction / Orientation**

Inductions are managed by your host department and the Graduate School of Life Sciences (GSLS), or School of Technology or School of Physical Sciences. Your college will also have a matriculation event to welcome you to Cambridge. Information on department inductions is available directly from your department of research. The GSLS induction and current student information is available below as well as access to your Cambridge email address:

https://www.vle.cam.ac.uk/course/view.php?id=130642
https://www.vle.cam.ac.uk/course/view.php?id=144821

Pre-arrival advice and tips from the International Office: http://www.internationalstudents.cam.ac.uk/arriving

https://help.uis.cam.ac.uk/new-starters/it-for-students
Section 8: NIH Cambridge Buddy System
The NIH-Cambridge buddy system is student-led and in place to help new scholars become accustomed to Cambridge. First years are paired together with older scholars before arriving in Cambridge so they can get to know each other and get acquainted with how Cambridge works. Tasks like opening a bank account, figuring out how to find out about events, and navigating the city may seem daunting at first but become easy with the support of the NIH-Cambridge Scholars community.

Section 9: Core Skills Training Programme and training opportunities
There are many opportunities for skills training at Cambridge, but you must complete the modules on the core skills training programme (CSTP) as part of your first year of your PhD.

CSTP - https://www.vle.cam.ac.uk/course/view.php?id=122461
Researcher Development - https://www.gradschl.lifesci.cam.ac.uk/GSLSRD
Graduate School of Life Sciences student site - https://www.vle.cam.ac.uk/course/view.php?id=144821

Section 10: Going back to the USA
Advice from an OxCam Scholar
The transition is different depending on which part of the country the person is from, how close their friends and relatives are to DC, and whether they established any presence/social groups at NIH or in DC during their previous stay at the NIH campus.

I would advise you to start looking for housing as soon as you know you intend to return and to join the NIH post-bacc listserv http://groups.yahoo.com/group/clubpcc/. The postbaccc community is larger and more active than the grad student community, and they use the listserv to post offers and requests for housing, furniture, events, volunteering opportunities, etc.

Once you determine where you're living and whether you'll be driving or Metro/busing to work you can go get your parking pass (http://parking.nih.gov/parking_permits.htm) for campus or join the Transhare Program( http://dtts.ors.od.nih.gov/transhare.htm ) which pays for your Metro and Bus card every month. The current parking situation is that, depending on your building, it takes 5-10 minutes to park and the same to get back to your building as long as you arrive before 10:30 AM. There is a free valet/double-parking service in the garages so it is possible to find parking somewhere if you arrive before noon. In general, Metroing is the preferred method of transport but you can't have both a Transhare pass and a parking pass so if you ever want to be able to drive onto campus, or control your commute time (bad weather, track problems, or if you can't stand the cold like me...) you'll want to go with the parking pass. Austin Swafford Year of 2009

Subsidised housing: The NIH also has on- and off-campus subsidised housing, subject to availability. Please contact the NIH OxCam offices in Bethesda for more information.

Section 11: University Code of Practice
A revised version of the Code of Practice for Graduate Research Degrees for students beginning their research degrees has been posted on the web at:

http://www.cambridgestudents.cam.ac.uk/new-students/manage-your-studentinformation/graduate-students/code
Section 12: Other useful information

Loan Renewal
For students who require loan renewal certification or authorisation, send forms to:
Jane Armitage (Student Registry): jane.armitage@admin.cam.ac.uk

Data Protection – How we use your personal information (for applicants)
https://www.information-compliance.admin.cam.ac.uk/data-protection/applicant-data

Data Protection – How we use your personal information (current students)
https://www.information-compliance.admin.cam.ac.uk/data-protection/student-data

Term dates http://www.cam.ac.uk/univ/termdates.html

GCAT OxCam website https://gcat.medschl.cam.ac.uk/graduate-training-office/clinical-schol-graduate-degree-courses/nih-oxford-cambridge-scholars-program/

NIH OxCam http://oxcam.gpp.nih.gov

MD/PhD https://oxcam.gpp.nih.gov/about/mdphd-partnership-program

IT Matters @ Cambridge
https://help.uis.cam.ac.uk/new-starters/it-for-students/student-it-services

FAQs

What degree will I be awarded?

The Certificate will state Doctor of Philosophy – nothing else.
The Transcript will show Doctor of Philosophy and then have the course plan included.